

October 21, 2009

The Honorable Kate Ebli,
Chair, Tax Policy Committee
Michigan House of Representatives
N0990 House Office Building
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

Good day Representative Ebli:

My name is Michael Fox, Jr., and I am a resident of Adrian, Michigan. As both a recipient and advocate, I know firsthand the difference the Workers On Wheels (W.O.W.) Program administered through Goodwill Industries of Southeastern Michigan, is making in the lives of local residents. In February 2004, my then fiancé and now wife of four and a half years got into a motor vehicle accident. At that point, we had to rely on our limited public transportation services and the few friends we have in the area to get where we needed to care for our family. In June 2004, I submitted my W.O.W. application and by September 2004, I was in my 1997 Plymouth Voyager that I will have now owned 5 years. Enough about me; you can read about my educational, personal and professional accomplishments on the next page.

I write on behalf of the countless families who rely on the W.O.W. Program to assist them with obtaining a dependable vehicle that will allow them to meet the needs of their families by maintaining decent employment and earning competitive wages. It also allows them to finish college degrees, seek better employment opportunities, and serve their communities in more profound ways.

It is individuals like my friend: a wife, mother of three, and 2008 graduate from Adrian College with a Bachelor of Arts degree that speaks for the necessity to continue offering incentives for donors and funding the W.O.W. Program. She has a similar situation to mine from 5 years back; being in a motor vehicle accident earlier that year which left her family without transportation while she was trying to finish her education. Also, having to rely on our limited public transportation services and the few friends in town to assist with the care of her family's basic needs (appointments, groceries, and more) on top of, managing their own busy schedules. At the same time, getting herself and her husband to the job interviews they were granted. What are they to do if offered a position today, but are still without means of transportation to get to and from the site or attend important evening commitments?

I am particularly pleased that 367 families have been blessed with a vehicle because of the generous car donations and the financial partnership of DHS over the last several years. I strongly urge you to encourage the full House and Senate to vote in favor of continuing to provide the tax credits for commendable car donors. These credits and funding brings many deserving and disadvantaged families in Lenawee County access to reliable transportation. I truly understand the ongoing budget constraints our state is facing, but not renewing these credits will just make matters worse. The investment now will only strengthen Michigan's economy by graduating four-year and advanced degree holders and elevating productive citizens into successful professional careers.

Thank you, Representative Ebli, for working toward the renewal of donor tax incentives and the W.O.W. Program's contract in October 2011, so funding can be used to serve and place countless more Lenawee County families on the ride toward realizing their potential and achieving true success.

Respectfully,



Michael Fox, Jr.
2004 W.O.W. Minivan Owner
2007 W.O.W. Recipient of the Year

Enclosure

Cc: Dudley Spade, State Representative, 57th House District
Cameron Brown, State Senator, 16th Senate District